

**To:** Spalding, Curt[Spalding.Curt@epa.gov]  
**From:** Enck, Judith  
**Sent:** Wed 3/2/2016 2:36:26 PM  
**Subject:** FW: News Clips (PFOA)

Hi curt: see article that says saint gobaine is now providing bottled water in north bennington judithy

**From:** Rodriguez, Elias **On Behalf Of** Region2 PAD News  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 02, 2016 8:51 AM  
**To:** R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff) <R2\_EPA\_Region\_2\_EPA\_Staff@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** News Clips (PFOA)

## **Politico: State pollution investigation of Hoosick Falls widens**

By Scott Waldman

Mar. 2, 2016

ALBANY — The state is investigating at least 11 possible contaminated or illegal dumping sites in the Hoosick Falls area, according to multiple sources with knowledge of the probe.

The proliferation of the pollution in a variety of sites confirms that pollution in the village goes far beyond the Saint-Gobain facility that state officials have determined is responsible for the PFOA in the municipal water supply and could make finding a new water source more challenging. Some of the private wells have also tested for extremely high levels of PFOA, more than 30 times the federal Environmental Protection Agency's recommended limit of 100 parts per trillion. Some are miles from the factory site, and are likely polluted with PFOA after illegal dumping from the factory.

DEC spokeswoman Emily DeSantis would not disclose the number of investigations, but confirmed that there were multiple sites.

"DEC is actively investigating multiple potential sources of illegal dumping in the Hoosick Falls area and the investigation is ongoing," she said in a statement.

The 42 properties that have tested above safe federal drinking water limits thus far will be the first to receive water treatment systems provided by the Cuomo administration, director of state operations Jim Malatras said last week.

However, the state's PFOA well test results show another troubling trend. Of the 145 water tests to date, an additional 62 wells showed detectable levels of PFOA. The EPA is expected to lower its level of 100 parts per trillion later this spring, to a lower number for long-term exposure. Many of the wells currently below safe limits will likely be deemed unsafe in the near future. That means two-thirds of the wells tested by the state could have dangerous levels of PFOA,

suggesting an extensive pollution plume or multiple plumes in the region.

But the widening pollution plume also shows a deeper concern for state and federal officials: the PFOA could be spreading from one aquifer to another. The public water in Petersburg, located just 10 miles away, also tested at the EPA's warning limit, and wells in nearby North Bennington, which also is home to a Saint-Gobain facility, have tested positive for elevated levels of the chemical.

"DEC is moving as swiftly as possible to install filtration systems on private wells and to complete the testing to ensure the water is safe to drink," acting DEC commissioner Basil Seggos said in a statement. "In addition, DEC will begin testing aquifers and other potential sources as we move forward with our study for an alternate water supply."

A rapidly widening pollution field could mean that the region's entire watershed is too polluted to use as a future water source. That would mean that Hoosick Falls must turn to other sources for water, including the reservoir used by the city of Troy.

The state is spending \$10 million to install 1,500 private well water treatment systems in the region and to plan for a new water system. It's still unclear where the funding for a new water system would come. Saint-Gobain and Honeywell, the companies identified by the state as being responsible for the pollution, have only committed to lesser, and far cheaper, measures such a carbon filtration system. A new water system could cost tens of millions of dollars.

The state is now overseeing the installation of a temporary water treatment system. As part of that process, the village is now flushing the water supply. Some of the PFOA-tainted water will end up in the nearby Hoosic River, state officials acknowledge. However, they do not "anticipate any significant effects," according to an update provided to village residents.

"The amount of flush water to be discharged will be greatly diluted by the flow of the river," DEC officials wrote. "DEC expects any increase in the PFOA level in the Hoosic River to be negligible."

The Hoosic River is not used as a drinking water source, according to the DEC. But PFOA is known to be resilient in the environment, and does not easily break down in water.

## **NYS DOH releases Hoosick Falls PFOA numbers**

Web staff Published: March 1, 2016, 6:08 pm Updated: March 1, 2016, 6:18 pm

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – The New York State Department of Health has released more water test results regarding the PFOA contamination in Hoosick Falls.

The tests were completed before the new filtration system was installed and operating.

The water samples were taken in January and February at the Hoosick Falls Water Treatment Plant. The level of PFOA at the plant was 983 parts per trillion, which is well above the new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency advisory level of 100 parts per trillion.

Other samples from the municipal water supply came back at 1,010 parts per trillion, also above the EPA advisory level.

The health department will now conduct new tests to determine PFOA levels since the new filtration system is running.

Residents are still advised not to drink or cook with the water.

### **More testing of Hoosick Falls water before filtration**

By WRGB Staff Tuesday, March 1st 2016

Hoosick Falls Mayor David Borge

HOOSICK FALLS -Some residents in Hoosick Falls are being told they can flush the water in their homes.

CBS6 News saw New York State Department of Health employees going door to door, handing out pamphlets to let some residents know that water main flushing was done in their area, an effort to get rid of PFOA contaminated water in the system. The pamphlets told residents they can start flushing plumbing and appliances inside their homes.

Once all the flushing is done, Hoosick Falls Mayor David Borge said the State will take a number of samples to make sure the newly installed filtration system is working.

For now, residents are still being told not to drink or cook with the water.

Monday, the State released some more sample results taken over the past couple of months. A few samples taken from the Village water showed a bump in PFOA levels. That was before the new filter system was up and running, but CBS6 News asked the Mayor about that.

"I've been told by the Department of Health there are a number of reasons for that. Heavy rains can have an impact on it, you'd think the rain would dilute it, and it would in some areas, but others it may cause the concentrations to be a little higher. Again, they've taken follow up samples and they have then been more in line with what we had been seeing," said Hoosick Falls Mayor David Borge. "I really want to stress the fact this is pre-GAC filter. We don't have any sample results yet from the filtered water that's going through."

### **City officials: No PFOA detected in Glens Falls water**

MAURY THOMPSON

poststar.com

Feb 29, 2016

GLENS FALLS □ Four consecutive quarterly tests in 2015, the most recent on Dec. 22, detected no presence of the chemical PFOA in Glens Falls drinking water, said City Engineer Steve Gurzler.

PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, is the potentially cancer-causing chemical that contaminated the municipal drinking water supply in Hoosick Falls, and has been found in five private wells in North Bennington, Vermont.

“We were unable to detect it in our water supply using the specified test,” Gurzler said.

Gurzler said the quarterly tests were conducted as part of a federal Environmental Protection Agency process for regulating new contaminants, not because of any suspected PFOA contamination of Glens Falls drinking water.

“Periodically, every couple of years, they come out with a new list of things they want us to sample for to see if they need to regulate them,” he said.

Gurzler was responding to a report by Albany Times Union freelance columnist Fred LeBrun on Sunday that mentioned sites of PFOA contamination or possible contamination.

“So now we play hopscotch with PFOA contamination as if the state is just now discovering there may be other sites. Petersburg, the Little Hoosick, nearby Bennington, and, I’m told, Glens Falls could show up on that radar as well.”

Gurzler said the report is not accurate, and suggested LeBrun may have confused Glens Falls with some other community with a similar sounding name.

“Nobody from the Health Department has talked to us about requesting any additional monitoring,” he said.

Glens Falls Mayor Jack Diamond also disputed LeBrun’s report.

“We have done some testing, and there’s no traces at all in our city water,” he said.

LeBrun, contacted by The Post-Star, defended his report.

He said a Glens Falls company used PFOA in its manufacturing process from 1997 to 2002.

LeBrun said he learned of it from an engineer who was associated with the company, W.F. Lake Corp. That plant is located in the Warren-Washington Counties Industrial Park, which straddles the Queensbury-Kingsbury town line and is not in the city of Glens Falls.

“It comes from somebody who was intimately involved with creating the process,” LeBrun said.

A Post-Star call to W.F. Lake on Monday was not returned.

PFOA is a material used in the manufacture of products, such as Teflon, to coat metal to prevent sticking or coat fabrics to resist stains.

Tests have shown the chemical to cause cancer in animals, but not necessarily in humans, according to the American Cancer Society.

The state Health Department “is not currently involved in activities related” to the Queensbury company, said JP O’Hare, a Health Department spokesman.

O’Hare referred questions about Glens Falls drinking water to city officials.

Queensbury Supervisor John Strough said even if the company had used PFOAs in its manufacturing process, it is “very unlikely” the chemical would have contaminated either the Queensbury or Glens Falls water supply because of the proximity of the industrial park to the section of the Hudson River where Queensbury draws its drinking water or the reservoirs in Queensbury where Glens Falls draws its drinking water.

“I don’t think that groundwater flows toward the Hudson. That’s part of the Lake Champlain Basin groundwater,” he said, referring to groundwater from the industrial park.

Gurzler, the city engineer, said there are no industrial plants in close proximity to the city’s reservoirs.

“It’s not likely that our (Glens Falls) water supply, which is surrounded by residential land or forest land, would have any PFOA in it,” he said.

In Hoosick Falls, Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, the factory believed to be responsible for the contamination in that village, is located close to municipal wells, said Peter Iwanowicz, executive director of Environmental Advocates, an advocacy group in Albany.

“In instances where it was not directly into a water discharge or was away from wells, hopefully that won’t be showing up,” he said.

Follow staff writer Maury Thompson at All Politics is Local blog, at PS\_Politics on Twitter and at Maury Thompson Post-Star on Facebook.

WBUR

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

### **Joining Flint, A Drinking Water Crisis Grows In Upstate New York**

In this Jan. 21, 2016, photo, the Hoosic River runs through the village of Hoosick Falls, N.Y. New York regulators say Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics and Honeywell International are required to pay for the investigation and cleanup of a toxic chemical in the upstate village’s drinking water. (Mike Groll/AP)

With national attention still on lead-tainted water in Flint, Michigan, another water crisis is growing in Upstate New York. Residents of Hoosick Falls, a village of 3,500 near Albany, may

have been drinking water contaminated with perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), also known as C8 and perfluorooctanoate, for months before state and federal environmental regulators stepped in to impose emergency filtration measures.

Last week, a federal class-action lawsuit was filed against the owners of the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics plant, whose production of Teflon – the nonstick coating for pans – has been linked to the contaminated drinking water. And the crisis is spreading: PFOA is also suspected in the nearby towns of Petersburg, New York and North Bennington, Vermont.

Here & Now's Robin Young talks with Lucas Willard, the Southern Adirondack bureau chief for WAMC.

### **Proposed bill would allow water crisis lawsuits past current statute of limitations**

By Lindsay Nielsen

February 29, 2016, 6:53 pm

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – Local lawmakers hope a new bill will change the statute of limitations for filing a lawsuit in connection to the Hoosick Falls water crisis.

Lawmakers fear that some in Hoosick Falls may be left behind when it comes to filing lawsuits, but they have a plan they hope can change that.

"It's a matter of making sure that people have a right to file an action and proceed," Assemblyman John McDonald said.

"A lot of people are going to be left at the courthouse door if we don't change the law with respect to PFOA exposure," attorney E. Stewart Jones said.

Stacy Parker lives in Hoosick Falls.

"My own children have had some endocrine issues," she said. "I, myself, am a two-time cancer survivor, including thyroid cancer."

The existing statute of limitations to bring a personal injury claim has already passed for many when it comes to the date someone may have become sick from PFOA exposure. But many like Parker didn't know their illness could have come from the PFOA contamination in the village drinking water.

A new bill would change that. It would allow a claim to be filed within three years from the time a site is deemed a state or federal superfund site as well as three years from the time the date of injury could be related to exposure.

Jones said he already has clients from Hoosick Falls with health issues, and he believes they have a strong case.

“They have known for years, as a result of litigation involving DuPont that this is a bad chemical, and action should have been taken,” he said. “It should have been added to the prohibited list, and federal and state governments should have acted more quickly; certainly the DEC. The State of New York has a lot of bright people. They knew this was not something that anybody should be exposed to. But until something like Hoosick Falls occurs, governments don’t act.”

The current legislative session ends in June. McDonald hopes the bill will pass by then.

### **Saint-Gobain now paying for bottled water in North Bennington**

By Noel McLaren Published: March 1, 2016, 10:59 am Updated: March 1, 2016, 5:43 pm

NORTH BENNINGTON, Vt. (NEWS10) — One of the companies deemed responsible for PFOA contamination in Hoosick Falls is also paying for bottled water in North Bennington.

Multiple private wells in North Bennington, a commercial well, and the Bedrock Drinking Water Well at the Bennington Wastewater Treatment Plant tested positive for the chemical PFOA. As a result, the Department of Environmental Conservation has begun collecting water samples from the 80 to 100 homes within a 1.5 mile radius of the former ChemFab facility.

The public water supply was not affected.

“I certainly think that’s a safe statement that some or all of these wells will show some level of PFOA, but we still want to get the information to know and also see where it’s the worst and where it’s not,” Richard Spiese, Vermont DEC, said. “And we’ll use that information to try and determine where the contaminant has traveled.”

DEC staff members will go door-to-door to take samples. Sampling is expected to last through Friday and longer if necessary

“We probably won’t get through all of them today, but our sampling team, we are probably looking at sampling around 100 wells,” Spiese said.

An emergency operations center has been set up at the Vermont Department of Health Offices at 324 Main St. The center is meant to be a resource for residents with questions.

“How could this happen in such a beautiful area?” North Bennington homeowner Mary Marine wondered. “I just never anticipated anything like that.”

Vermont officials met with Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics on Monday. The company took over for ChemFab and operated the plant in North Bennington until it closed in 2002. The company agreed to pay for bottled water for affected residents and the tests being run on private wells in North Bennington.

Saint-Gobain has also agreed to initiate, install, maintain, and sample Point of Entry Treatment systems on each impacted water supply.

The Marines said it’s not much comfort, but they’re happy to see the state is taking action.

“You think the water you’re drinking is fine, and you find this out – that it could be cancer forming or whatever,” they said. “Yeah, it bothers you.”

The Vermont Department of Health and the DEC have both launched websites on the North Bennington situation:

Health Commissioner Dr. Harry Chen will hold a briefing Tuesday for doctors in the Bennington area with general information on potential health impacts of PFOA water contamination.

#### STATEMENT FROM SAINT GOBAIN SPOKESPERSON:

We understand that tests commissioned by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation showed no detection of PFOA in the public water system for Bennington. The tests did reveal elevated levels of PFOA in three residential private wells, as well as two commercial sites. Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics has contacted state and local officials and has offered to fund the provision of bottled water and point-of-use filtration systems for these locations and others that might be affected. We will cooperate with all local, state and federal officials as they investigate and manage this issue.

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics acquired the Chemfab plant in North Bennington, Vermont, in 2000 and closed the facility for production in 2002. The PTFE raw materials that were purchased during our operation of the site did include PFOA. Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics never manufactured PFOA or PTFE at any of its locations. We purchase PTFE from suppliers to manufacture products for various industries.

Times Union

#### **Don’t downplay the risks**

By TU Editorial Board

March 1, 2016 at 3:30 AM

It’s encouraging that New York state now seems to be taking the drinking water crisis in some Rensselaer County communities seriously. But there’s reason to believe that the state’s default setting in the face of such public health threats has for too long been “minimize.”

Years ago, that was apparent in the state’s long refusal to admit to problems in the low-income neighborhood around the downtown Albany ANSWERS plant, which burned shredded trash to supply steam to Empire State Plaza. Only after citizens sued, and a state scientist did tests on his own, did New York acknowledge the damage, stop burning trash, and pay a \$1.4 million settlement.

Behind that controversy, we now know, lay another story. An internal memo by a scientist for the Health Department’s Center for Environmental Health, just uncovered by the Times Union’s Brendan J. Lyons, revealed that studies of the plant’s emissions by the center were never shared with the Department of Environmental Conservation, nor published in-house or in peer-



reviewed journals. The memo's author suggests the state was "afraid to 'find a problem' and panic the population or have their work used as a justification for remediation of the problem."

So it's no surprise that this "keep calm and carry on" strategy initially surfaced again in Hoosick Falls, where both the village's drinking water supply and nearby private wells have been found to contain high levels of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Yes, the state has recently stepped in aggressively, but only after the Times Union detailed both the problem and the state's and village's lax response. That response included a meeting with residents in December at which CEH employees handed out a "fact sheet" dismissing health effects from the levels of PFOA in the water.

Three weeks later, after the paper brought the issue to light, the fact sheet was revised. The state went from telling people that they "may" consider using bottled water for drinking and food preparation to stating that they "should." Since then, the state has declared it a superfund site and is financing an upgrade of the village's water filtration system.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo last month also announced creation of a Water Quality Rapid Response Team, so New York can "immediately address water quality issues raised by municipalities and concerned citizens" on both regulated contaminants, such as lead, and "emerging" ones like PFOA.

That's a positive step, but only if the state sheds an apparent mind-set of downplaying risks. A culture change is needed. We're not suggesting New York act like the sky is falling with every potential crisis. But New Yorkers need to know that when potential danger looms, the state's impulse isn't to tamp down legitimate concerns of a jittery public.

When it suspects there is poison in the ground or the air, New York needs to do more than suggest everyone take a deep breath, or have a drink.

Opinion

TIME WARNER CABLE NEWS

## **NY1 ItCH: Something In The Water**

By Bob Hardt

Friday, February 26, 2016

Take a drive upstate in rural Rensselaer County and you'll miss Hoosick Falls or Petersburg if you blink.

Perhaps blinking will be the excuse we will next hear from state Health officials who appear to have had their eyes closed when it comes to monitoring the drinking water for these two small towns.

NY1's Zack Fink last Friday looked at how the residents of Hoosick Falls were ignored by the state for months even after a local resident paid for a water test that found an elevated level of

PFOA, a chemical that is linked to cancer. A factory that is one of Hoosick Falls' main employers uses the chemical. It also sits just 400 yards away from one of the village's wells.

Even after the EPA was ringing the alarm bell last year and the factory itself was giving free bottled water to the town, the State Health Department issued a fact sheet to residents last December, telling them "health effects are not expected to occur from normal use of the water."

And this is after the state's own tests found PFOA levels for at least four water wells in the 600s parts per trillion. (The EPA guideline is 400 parts per trillion.) Only late last month did the state finally agree that there's a crisis in the town.

Just ten miles away from Hoosick Falls is Petersburg, where residents learned last weekend that there are elevated PFOA levels in their water – a possible contamination from a different plant. But a report in Politico New York today by reporter Scott Waldman shows that state Health officials had concerns about that town's water more than a year ago but said nothing publicly.

As state investigators were trying to learn more about Hoosick Falls' water in 2014, they all but stumbled upon Petersburg's potential problem. Regarding the town's Taconic Plastics factory, a state health engineer wrote in an e-mail: "It could possibly be a source of PFOA although I didn't see that in the list of chemicals."

A department spokesman tells Waldman: "The mention of Taconic in the email was speculative, the result of a single DOH staff person looking at a list of nearby potential industrial sources."

So that's how scientific inquiry is handled at the State Health Department.

As Waldman aptly notes: "The state's response to Petersburg and Hoosick Falls follows a similar pattern of early awareness and then a long period of inaction, followed by a flurry of activity when the situation became public."

Governor Cuomo this week has been busy touring the state in his push to raise the minimum wage. Perhaps he should take that fancy RV to Rensselaer County and try testing more of the county's water.

Bob Hardt

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